

# VIOLENT CRIME TOTAL

## DEFINITION

Violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. All violent crimes involve force or threat of force.

TREND		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1998	1,533,887	567.5
1999	1,430,693	524.7
Percent change	-6.7	-7.5

Violent crimes reported to the Nation's law enforcement agencies decreased from the estimated 1.5 million violent crimes in 1998 to approximately 1.4 million in 1999, a drop of nearly 7 percent. The 1999 estimated number represents the lowest violent crime total recorded since 1985. The estimated total demonstrates a decline of 20 percent from the 1995 level and a 21-percent drop from the 1990 level. When comparing 1998 and 1999 figures, violent crimes were down 8 percent in the Nation's cities overall. Among city population groupings, decreases ranged from a 10-percent decline in cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999 and those with populations under 10,000 to a 6-percent drop in cities with populations of 500,000 and over. Declines of 7 percent and 5 percent, respectively, were noted in suburban and rural counties.

Forty percent of all violent crimes in 1999 were registered in the South, the most populous region in the country. The West accounted for 23 percent of all violent crimes, the Midwest reported 20 percent, and the Northeast reported 17 percent. Violent crimes reported from 1998 to 1999 decreased in all four regions. A 9-percent decline was noted in both the West and Midwest; the Northeast and the South posted declines of 6 and 4 percent, respectively. (See Table 4.)

July was the month in which violent offenses most frequently occurred, and the least activity was recorded in February.

Table 2.2

#### Violent Crime Total by Month

Percent distribution, 1995-1999

Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
January	7.9	8.3	8.1	8.4	8.2
February	7.1	7.6	7.2	7.2	7.1
March	8.1	8.0	8.2	8.1	7.9
April	8.0	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.1
May	8.5	8.6	8.9	8.7	8.7
June	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.5
July	9.1	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.3
August	9.2	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.1
September	8.8	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.4
October	8.9	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.7
November	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.7	8.0
December	7.9	8.1	7.6	7.8	8.0

#### Rate

In 1999, the violent crime rate at 525 offenses per 100,000 was the lowest recorded since 1978. From 1998 to 1999, the violent crime rate fell 8 percent; from 1995, the violent crime rate declined 23 percent; and from 1990, the violent crime rate dropped 28 percent. In the Nation's metropolitan areas, the violent crime rate was 584 offenses per 100,000 population in 1999. In cities

outside metropolitan areas, a violent crime rate of 403 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants was noted, and a violent crime rate of 220 offenses per 100,000 population in rural counties was posted.

Compared to 1998 numbers, all regions of the country registered declines in rates—10 percent in the West, 9 percent in the Midwest, 7 percent in the Northeast, and 5 percent in the South. The South recorded a violent crime rate of 600 offenses per 100,000 inhabitants, and the West had a rate of 532. The Northeast showed a rate of 468, and the Midwest reported a rate of 449. (See Table 4.)

#### Nature

In 1999, aggravated assaults accounted for 64 percent of all violent crimes, and robberies accounted for an additional 29 percent. Six percent of all violent crimes were forcible rapes, and 1 percent of all violent crimes were homicides.

Personal weapons, such as hands, fists, and feet, etc. were used in 32 percent of all murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults, collectively, in 1999. Other dangerous weapons were used in 27 percent of all violent crimes; firearms were used in 25 percent; and knives or cutting instruments were used in 15 percent. Data concerning weapons used in connection with forcible rape are not collected.

#### Law Enforcement Response

In 1999, law enforcement agencies registered a 50 percent clearance rate for violent crimes. Sixty-nine percent of murders were cleared, as were 59 percent of all aggravated assaults, 49 percent of forcible rapes, and 29 percent of robberies.

An estimated 635,990 persons were arrested for violent crimes in 1999, accounting for 5 percent of the total arrests for all offenses and 28 percent of the total Index crime arrests. Males accounted for 83 percent of all violent crime arrestees, whites for 59 percent, and adults for 84 percent. Persons under 25 years of age made up 44 percent of all violent crime arrestees. (See Tables 38, 41, 42, and 43.)

There was a 6-percent decline in the total number of arrests for violent crimes across the Nation from 1998 to 1999. Cities collectively noted a 6-percent decline, suburban counties posted a 7-percent drop, and rural counties had a 4-percent decrease during that time period. Across the Nation, juvenile (persons under age 18) arrests decreased 8 percent, and adult arrests fell 6 percent from 1998 levels. (For a breakdown on persons arrested by law enforcement in city, suburban, and rural areas, see Section IV, Persons Arrested.)

# Figure 2.5

**Violent Crime**  
Percent Change  
from 1995

